



State Capitol | Lansing, Michigan 48913

PH (517) 373.7708 | FAX (517) 373.1450

www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/senator/gilbert/

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Contact: Scott Starr
517-373-7708

Solid Waste Regulations Become Stricter

Legislative package passed today by Senate

LANSING—Solid waste regulations and inspections of landfills and transported waste will increase, state Sen. Jud Gilbert (R-Algonac) announced today after the Senate overwhelmingly passed a 14-bill bipartisan package.

“This package provides a comprehensive revision of Michigan’s solid waste management program,” Gilbert said. “It will offer additional safeguards from inappropriate waste being disposed of in Michigan’s landfills to protect our citizens from public health threats and it will also encourage them to recycle.”

The bills include the following key provisions:

- Authorizes the state Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to establish a statewide inspection program, which would mandate at least four inspections each year of each landfill to ensure compliance. Random inspections would also be conducted to help ensure compliance.
- Starting Oct. 1, 2004, landfills would be required to refuse waste, regardless of its source, that did not meet Michigan’s stringent waste standards.
- Adds two important new landfill bans—beverage containers and whole tires—to further reduce reliance on landfills and encourage recycling.
- Grants the DEQ director emergency power to prohibit any waste shipment that poses a threat to the public’s health or safety or to the safety of the environment.
- Adds new fines, of up to \$25,000 per day, for violating certain laws related to disposing of waste in landfills.
- Mandates a 2-year moratorium on issuing certain new landfill permits.
- Two resolutions urge Congress to act to allow states to control the flow and deposit of out-of-state waste.

“These bills were designed to protect our environment without discriminating against interstate commerce,” Gilbert said. “The Michigan Legislature will move forward to carry out the will of the vast majority of its citizens. Be assured that the Legislature will continue to seek ways to carry out its constitutionally mandated roles as stewards of the states precious natural resources.”